THE CHAPLAIN AND MISSIONARY PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH

a
Monograph
by

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this monograph is to see what military chaplains have done and what they may do to further the cause of Christ through active participation in the world-wide missionary program of the church.

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PREFACE

The purpose of this paper, The Military Chaplain and the Missionary Program of the Church, is to see what chaplains have done in the past and what they may do in the present and in the future to further the cause of Christ around the world. Only a brief, generalized treatment of the subject is presented because it is my hope that the very brevity of the paper will encourage wider reading than a long paper would receive. My desire is that more and more chaplains will become so vitally interested in the missionary enterprise that they will actively support it and will seek to get there congregations to do the same.

Something of the value of missions can be seen by looking at Hawaii, our fiftieth state. In 1819 the first company of missionaries were sent to Hawaii by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. These pioneers were given the following commission by the board: "Aim at nothing short of covering these islands with fruitful fields and pleasant dwellings, and schools and churches, and raising up the whole people to our elevated state of Christian civilization." Hiram Bingham and his associates probably did not foresee the degree to which this goal was to be realized. On Statehood Day in 1959 Abraham Akaka spoke to leading officials and legislators of Hawaii and recalled for them the roots of Hawaiian life today: "These missionaries, under God, became the greatest single influence in Hawaii's whole development, politically, economically, educationally, socially, and religiously".

Surely a cause that produces such results is worthy of our whole-hearted support, especially when we come to see the world-wide mission of the church as the central expression of Christian faith. Christian missions are our special channel of participation, as God's people, in His whole purpose for this planet. That purpose is to bring all peoples into one family through His son Jesus Christ. In an article called "Heritage and Horizons in Missions" in the November 9, 1960 issue of The Christian Century magazine David M. Stowe writes, "...The church exists not for itself, nor even for its own people and their upbuilding. Of course, it must upbuild and serve its own people. But essentially it exists for the world. It is not so much an end in itself as a means to an end which goes far beyond its own interests.... This is a costly view of the church, for it makes every congregation a missionary society and every Christian a missionary. And yet, this is the way it was always intended to be. Certainly this is the New Testament understanding of the church." With this view I agree.

"To the early Christians the world mission of the Church was the dominant and persuasive compulsion of religious experience. Tortured bodies, bleeding hands and feet, personal peril, imprisonment and martyrdom were among the sacrifices endured by Christians of the early centuries that the name of Christ might be preached to the ends of the then known world. Today in the case of certain local congregations the missionary enterprise is seldom mentioned..... Missions are often believed to be not the Church itself in action but a collateral and rather subordinate enterprise that can be taken up or neglected altogether in accordance with the financial convenience of the local congregation. The white heat of a deathless passion for the Christ who died for the sins of the whole world is too often utterly lacking."[1]

This statement by Dr. Walter W. Van Kirk, author and missionary statesman, is both an inspiration and a challenge to sincere Christians whether they be in civilian or military congregations. The military chaplain has the opportunity to lead his people into kinship with the early Christians or to lull them into smug complacency and passivity in relation to the world-wide missionary program of the Church militant. The concern of Jesus for "the other sheep," those not of the local fold or congregation or home country, has never diminished since he walked the Galilean highways. His was a global strategy as is shown by his commanding his disciples, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature"[2] and, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, ... and lo, I am with you .... unto the end of the world."[3]

[1]Walter W. Van Kirk, A Christian Global Strategy, Willett, Clark & Company, Chicago-New York, 1947, p. 39.
[2]Authorized King James Version of the Bible, Mark 16:15.
[3]Ibid, Matthew 28:19, 20.

A modern devotee of global strategy was Professor Karl Haushofer of Munich, but his concern was for global geography and politics and military strategy. He viewed the world in its entirety. He rebuked his fellow country-men who could not see beyond the walls of Europe. He proclaimed the idea of consolidating the whole world of mankind through the authoritarian despotism of a "chosen people". The Nazis were spurred by this teaching to embark on a terrifying campaign of conquest.

Haushofer's emphasis on the global aspects of geography and human relations is but a belated recognition of fundamental principles of the Christian gospel. Jesus was interested in geography, but for noble reasons. He planned for the bridging of the gap between East and West by the power of the Spirit, not by the instruments of physical violence. "Haushofer was a global strategist in the area of power politics and of military operations. Jesus was a global strategist in the area of religion. Against the parochialism and self-centeredness of the Western "plutocracies" Haushofer projected his dazzling conception of the universals in terms of German military conquest. Against the parochialism and self-centeredness of the Pharisees, Jesus projected his even more daring conception of the universals in terms of an over-all spiritual conquest."[1]

The early followers of Jesus took seriously his command to go into all the world, to preach and teach, and to make disciples of all nations. The Roman state had developed a kind of universalism based on a common law and supported by institutions of learning and by the expanding out-reach of political authority. The Romans had their own geopolitics and thus anticipated the world view of Haushofer by nineteen centuries.

[1]Van Kirk, op. cit., p. 13

But the Christians met the geopolitics of Rome with a geopolitics of their own. They sought to permeate the universalism of the Roman Empire with the spirit of Christ. They broke through the restricting limitations of Judaism and launched a spiritual enterprise that sought to replace the sectarianism of racial cults and ethnic religions. They won converts among slaves, masters, artisans, soldiers, philosophers, teachers and officials of government. From their early center in Jerusalem they moved out by land and sea in a great offensive movement to attack the strongholds of idolatry and heathenism across the then known world.

CONTAGIOUS CONCERN

In our generation, the pseudo geopolitics of Haushofer is responsible in large measure for a resurgence of interest in the global mission of the Christian enterprise. The war that the disciples of Haushofer launched in 1939 led to the sending of Allied troops all around the world. And nearly everywhere they went they came in contact with missions, and missionaries or their converts. Whether in Alaska, Asia, Africa or the Pacific, the troops were impressed by the great value of the work of the representatives of the church. The same favorable impression was made whether the work was Catholic or Protestant, Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, or other denomination.

Many of the opinions of troops toward missionary work were recorded by Dr. Henry Van Dusen in his book, <u>They Found the Church There</u>. Here are some samples: "In all fairness I must say that missionaries have done absolutely marvelous work." "Gee, I've certainly got a new angle on foreign missions. After having seen these people, I believe in missions."

"Now that I know what missions really are I'll freely give."[1] And Major Joe Foss, the marine pilot hero, wrote during World War II from the Solomon Islands to a pastor friend in Houston, Texas, "I had a rather pleasant experience a short time ago that should be of interest. Just happened to drop by a native village, where I understand a short time ago human flesh was considered quite a dish. On that particular Sunday, though, Church was in progress. It was nearly the same service you hold there at home, but the entire congregation was composed of as fine a band of ex-head hunters as you could ever see.... Because of the work of a few men with limited funds at their (the missionaries') disposal, American boys several thousand miles from the nearest S.H. Kress store have been received as friends and shown every courtesy a primitive people have to offer."[1]

The friendly reception by the natives was especially appreciated by the men who landed from disabled vessels or parachuted from crippled aircraft into areas under control of the enemy. The natives sheltered and fed many personnel and nursed back to health those who were sick or wounded, then escorted them back to safety behind their own lines. It is easy to see why these men and their comrades in arms who learned of their rescue by mission-influenced natives became generous contributors to the cause of missions. And others who observed the fine work and the transformed lives of Christian natives who formerly had been vicious savages or head-hunters also joined in liberally giving to further the missionary program.

[1]Henry P. Van Dusen, They Found the Church There, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1945, p. 144.
[1]Ibid, pp. 33, 34.

In fact, when service personnel have learned the truth about the cause of Christ in foreign lands either from first-hand observation or from others who know the truth, they respond with real concern.

The military chaplain often has been one of the leaders in fostering this concern for the world-wide mission of the church because of his recognition of himself as one who has been commissioned to do his part in getting the message of Christ out to the ends of the earth. His work of bringing God to men and men to God is not confined to helping only men in uniform. The love of God for men of all nations and all classes and colors has filled his heart and sharpened his awareness of the needs of those in the lands he has visited overseas. He has been a leader in the ranks of Good Samaritans who have ministered to the victims of violence, famine, disease and destruction.

When orphan children have come to his attention he has led his men in efforts to supply them with the necessities of life and provide them with a place to stay. These orphans have sometimes been "adopted" by his military organization and been provided with as good a home as money and loving care and hard work could provide. In some cases the orphans have been adopted into families of the chaplain or his men to receive the personal care of new fathers and mothers.

Many refugees from war-ravaged countries and from despotic political regimes have been able to take a new lease on life as the result of the generosity generated by the chaplain among his military parishioners. In addition to gifts of money, food and clothing there have been demonstrations of goodwill and encouragement to warm the hearts of the homeless and give them emotional and spiritual undergirding. And there have been

numerous instances in which civilian church congregations back in the chaplain's home country have been enlisted by him to help the refugees. At times this help has been in the form of material gifts, at other times the refugees have been sponsored when they went to seek new homes in the lands of those congregations.

Often the churches, schools, hospitals and mission stations where our troops have been sent have been damaged or totally destroyed as the result of war. Under these circumstances it has been a common occurrence for the chaplain to institute a program of reconstruction by seeking contributions of money and manpower and by setting a good example of generosity in both respects. The men have been brought to see the importance of the work of the church both in lands which have had the Christian message for centuries and in those places where that message was introduced within the last fifty years or so. They have done what they could to help restore buildings and get the work of Christ going again.

Where native pastors and other Christian workers have been forced by the privations of war to suspend or curtail their ministry of the gospel, our troops have been led to underwrite the support of these workers so they could return to full-time Christian service. This has been a very rewarding work because these native workers usually have a better command of the local language than do the missionaries and they are often more effective in their preaching and teaching. And since it takes less financial aid to support a native worker than it does a missionary, more nationals than missionaries can be supported with the money available.

There have been numerous instances where chaplains themselves and trusted members of their congregations have ministered directly to the spiritual needs of the native populations of occupied lands. Many religious services have been conducted by these "missionaires in military uniform". Organists from among the troops have provided music, and military choirs and other singing groups have made their contributions to the worship services. The sick and wounded have been visited and cared for and the dying have received religious rites and ministrations when native religious leaders or missionaries have not been at hand. The faith of many has been restored through such services. And in cases where such demonstrations of Christian grace have been performed for peoples whose armed forces have been fighting ours, great impetus has been given to the return of goodwill.

CONCERN WITH RESULTS

These and other valuable contributions have been made by military chaplains and their congregations to the world program of the church. What have been some of the results? For one thing these participants in the work of Christ have grown in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord. It is impossible to work sincerely for the blessing of others without in turn being blessed. Spiritual development comes as the result of spiritual exercise just as truly as physical development results from physical exercise. Or, to use a different example, Christians are like bodies of water. Some are like the Jordan River, which receives its start in the mountains of northern Palestine and is fed by fresh water streams along the way. It stays fresh because it keeps flowing on and giving out its waters below. Other Christians are like the Dead Sea which continually receives

the fresh waters of the Jordan at its upper end but it does not have any outlet for giving forth and sharing what it receives so it stagnates and earns the name Dead Sea. Christians receive continually the blessings of God but if they hug them to themselves and do not share them they stagnate and spiritual death ensues. We need more Jordan River-type Christians.

Another worthwhile result of active and continuing participation in the work of world-wide missions is the strengthening of the ties between the military members of the church and the rest of the church both at home and abroad. Too often there is a feeling among military personnel that they are cut off from the main part of the church. This feeling is dispelled to a large extent as they take part creatively in the on-going of Christ's kingdom. And many non-chaplain personnel have been so challenged by the work that they have dedicated themselves to full-time Christian service and have gone on to complete theological training so they could devote the rest of their lives to the ministry of the church.

PROMOTION OF INTEREST

We have looked at some of the ways chaplains and their military congregations have aided the cause of Christ in foreign lands and at some of the results of their Christian stewardship. Now we want to take a look at some of the ways in which chaplains may continue to cultivate interest in the missionary cause both at home and overseas. For this purpose there should be a program of missionary education. This can be carried on among both the children and the adults of the military population. In Catechism Classes and Sunday Schools there can be frequent

references to the missionary program, with possibly a monthly offering for missions to encourage stewardship in their behalf. Movies and slides showing missionary work may be shown. These are appropriate for persons of all ages and are especially helpful for people who have not had the opportunity to travel in foreign lands and see the missionary work there in person. For chapel groups of men, women, and youth there may be mission study classes. Protestant Women of the Chapel have such classes and they have proved to be very much worthwhile. Many church groups put out literature on the subject of missions. Such literature may be purchased from the Chaplain's Fund and be distributed by means of the literature racks in the Chapels and as inserts in the Sunday worship bulletins.

The chaplain is a key figure in this promotional work. He may occasionally or periodically preach on missions in the regular worship service. He may call on members of his congregation or other local persons who have seen the work of the church in foreign lands to speak before chapel groups. Of special interest will be the stories of personnel who were rescued by natives in lands occupied by enemy forces in wartime. Chaplains located near enough to theological seminaries may find there students from mission lands who will be glad to address the military congregations. And last and possibly best as a speaker on missions is the missionary who is home on furlough or the one who has been retired from foreign service but who is still an able campaigner for the cause so dear to his heart.

To aid the chaplain in his program of promotional activities there may be a missions committee composed of representatives from the Sunday School or Catechism Class and from the men's, women's and youth groups.

This committee could help provide publicity on special projects and services, recommend causes to be considered for financial support, handle correspondence, and keep a reference file on persons and causes to be helped or that have received help from any of the chapel-related groups.

WORTHWHILE PROJECTS

The various considerations discussed under promotion should help the military congregation learn about missions. But learning in this instance should not be an end in itself. It should lead to doing, to active participation in the cause of Christ around the world. Care should be exercised in the selection of projects and persons to be supported financially by military congregations whose members come from many denominations. Of course, in this instance the Protestant congregation is indicated. Perhaps even in Catholic congregations there might be some opposition if all offerings for missions went to just one religious order. But there is more possibility of misunderstanding in a Protestant congregation because of the greater number of separate religious groups represented. The exercise of good judgment here will help to preclude any misgivings about offerings for missions and will lead to spiritual enrichment of the contributors.

One group of Protestant causes worthy of support include such interdenominational organizations as CARE, World Literacy, Incorporated, and The American Bible Society. This society has helped translate the Scriptures into hundreds of languages and dialects so that people around the world may have the message of God in their own language. World Literacy, Incorporated is a movement aimed at teaching illiterates to

read and write and thus help them help themselves to a better life economically, intellectually and spiritually. CARE, as is widely known, is an organization which provides food packages and clothing to the poor and undernourished peoples of many lands, including the victims of disasters such as famines and earthquakes.

Children have great appeal and that is why it is not difficult to get military congregations to support orphanages at home or overseas. There are numerous instances of military units that have "adopted" orphanages and have continued to support them financially over the years. Another way to provide for orphans is for a chapel group such as a Sunday School to adopt a particular child and take care of his financial needs, carry on correspondence with him if he is old enough to read and write, or if he is too young for that, to correspond with the person at the orphanage in charge of the child.

When such children are old enough to go on to schooling beyond what the orphanage provides, their education may be guaranteed through scholarships which can be paid for by chapel groups. The cost of such scholarships in "mission" lands is usually much less than similar scholarships in this country. And there is great satisfaction in helping a deserving young person get started on a life of increased usefulness.

There are many types of institutions and organizations which deserve consideration. Agencies that minister to the blind, homes for the aged, leper colonies, schools, hospitals for the sick of body and the sick of mind, social welfare groups of many kinds - all these and more are worthy of help.

Then there are individual workers in the foreign mission lands who serve as our representatives in proclaiming the message of eternal life through Christ. The chaplain can encourage his people to give for the support of these missionaries through their local churches in their home communities. Those of his people who have no connection with a civilian church may be given opportunity to help support some missionary acquaintance of the chaplain or some native pastor or evangelist in some mission field.

In addition to giving of their money for the overseas agencies and workers of the church, the military congregations may be urged to offer their prayers for the various causes and representatives of Christ. Individual prayers in their behalf may be offered by all interested persons. Prayer cells of two or three persons can include missionaries on their prayer lists. In public worship the chaplain can lead his congregation in offering up prayers for the global work of Christ. The chaplain and his people should think of the missionaries and their work in terms of the words of the prophet Samuel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you."[1] Another Scripture also has significance here: "Where there is no vision the people perish."[2]

[1]Authorized King James Version of the Bible, I Samuel 12:23.
[2]Ibid, Proverbs 29:18.

CONCLUSION

We know that many chaplains do have a vision of the world's needs and a comprehensive understanding of the global strategy of Christ and the church. Such chaplains have done much personally for the missionary enterprise and have led their people into doing much more for this cause. But as long as there is so much fear and tension, so much sin and suffering, so much hatred and idolatry there must be no ease in Zion. Too often and for too long a time the church as a whole has practiced ecclesiastical isolationism. We Christians of the West have feasted at the table of our own houses of worship and tossed the crumbs of our prosperity to the unnumbered millions of God's children in so-called heathen lands. We may even talk in terms of a global gospel but our actions have denied our talk. Our zeal for the cause of Christ must equal and exceed the zeal of the followers of the Haushofers and the Lenins of this world. We serve the living Christ.

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RESUME
by
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on

"THE CHAPLAIN AND MISSIONARY PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH"
by
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The purpose of Chaplain Lee's monograph is to see what military chaplains have done and what they may do to further the cause of Christ through active participation in the world-wide missionary program of the church.

In Section I, A Comprehensive Outlook, Chaplain Lee mentions missionary work in Hawaii, in the days of the early church, and contrasts the theories of Professor Karl Haushofer's global geography and politics with Jesus' concept of global strategy in religion. The author states that early Christians broke through Roman geopolitics with their own Christian outreach.

Contagious Concern, Section II, shows how geopolitics resulted in allied troops circling the globe. These troops were favorably impressed with missions; missions were supported by these troops after the war. Military chaplains have often believed in and supported this concern. Orphans, refugees, schools, and indigenous leaders have all benefited from the leadership of chaplains. Some chaplains have even gone so far as to minister directly to the natives.

Major Lee points out in Section III, Concern With Results, that growth in grace, knowledge of the Lord, spiritual development, and strengthened ties between the military and the church-at-large are the results of the chaplains' missionary work.

Section IV, Promotion of Interest, stresses how chaplains can effectively use programs of missionary education for children and adults. It also reminds us that the chaplain is a key figure in promotion through his preaching and through invitations to guest speakers. A missions committee representing all chapel organizations is recommended for all chapel congregations.

In Section V, Worthwhile Projects, the author lists many ways in which chapels may aid the missionary cause. With the chaplain using his good judgment, he may select from interdenominational causes such as CARE, World Literacy, Inc., and The American Bible Society. The appeal of children attracts support for orphanages, hospitals, "adoption" plans, and schools. The chaplain should lead his congregation in prayers for all causes, prayers in public worship, in prayer cells, and in private devotions.

Major Lee concludes his monograph with the warning that we must serve the living Christ, that there is much to be done, and that our zeal must exceed that of the Lenins and Haushofers of this world.